AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A content selection method for selecting a content from among a plurality of contents or content providing devices, in which a content selection requesting station selects from among a plurality of content providing stations having the contents or content providing devices, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

the content selection requesting station storing a selection rule for selecting from among the content providing stations;

~~the content selection requesting station receiving a content selection request entered by an operator;~~

~~the content selection requesting station selecting one of the content providing stations in accordance with the selection rule; and~~

~~the content selection requesting station transmitting the content selection request to the thus selected one of the content providing stations~~

transmitting a content switching instruction to the content selection requesting station in accordance with operation of the operator; and

the content selection requesting station, which has received the content switching instruction, transmitting the content switching instruction to a content providing station,

wherein, the content providing station switches the content or content providing device to be selected, every time the same operation of the operator is performed.

2. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

sending back ~~a~~ the content held by the content providing station, from the content providing station that has received the content ~~selection request~~switching instruction, to the content selection requesting station.

3. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

the content selection requesting station storing information for specifying a content providing station and an associated content providing device that have been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station; and

the content selection requesting station resuming, in accordance with the information, connection with the content providing station and the associated content providing devices that have been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station, if the content selection requesting station has previously received a content from the associated content providing device of the content providing station and the connection has been stopped.

4. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

the content selection requesting station storing information for specifying a content providing station that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station;

the content providing station storing information for specifying an associated content or content providing device that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station; and

resuming, in accordance with these sets of information, connection between the content selection requesting station and the content providing station that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station, if the content selection requesting station has previously received the associated content from the content providing station and the connection has been stopped, or if the content selection requesting station has previously received a content from the content providing device of the content providing station and the connection has been stopped.

5. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 4, wherein:

if explicitly disconnected by the content selection requesting station, or if having performed no video transmission to the content selection requesting station for a certain period from a last time the content providing station has performed video transmission to the content selection requesting station, the content providing station erases the information, which is stored by the content providing station, for specifying the content or content providing device that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 5, wherein:

if having performed no video transmission to the content selection requesting station for a certain period from a last time it has performed video transmission to the content selection requesting station, the content providing station erases the information, which it stores, for specifying the content or content providing device that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station.

7. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in Claim 2, wherein:

the content providing station transmits, to the content selection requesting station, information regarding a content that is to send back to the content selection requesting station.

8. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 2, wherein:

the content providing station transmits, to the content selection requesting station, information regarding a content or content providing device that is available to be selected next by the content selection requesting station.

9. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 2, wherein:

the content providing station transmits, to the content selection requesting station, information regarding a content or content providing device that is available to be selected by the content selection requesting station.

10. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

the selection rule regarding the content providing stations, which is stored in the content selection requesting station, is to reselect a content providing station that has been selected first, after ~~all~~ selection of the content providing stations targeted for selection ~~are selected~~ is performed more than once in accordance with the selection rule.

11. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, ~~comprising the steps of~~ wherein:

if there still remains a content or content providing device to select, the thus selected one of the content providing stations selecting, in accordance with a predetermined content selection rule, a content or content providing device to select next, and the thus selected one of the content providing stations transmitting what is contained in the content or content providing device to select next, to the content selection requesting station; and

if there remains no content or content providing device that is to select, the thus selected one of the content providing stations transmitting information that there remains no content or content providing device to select.

12. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

when receiving the information that there remains no content or content providing device to select, the content selection requesting station changes a content providing station connected

to the content selection requesting station, in accordance with the selection rule for selecting from among the content providing stations.

13. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

the content selection requesting station confirming (i) a communication state regarding communication between the content selection requesting station and the thus selected one of the content providing stations, and (ii) a response state regarding responding from the thus selected one of the content providing stations; and

if the communication state is less than a ~~desired~~ level, the content selecting requesting station selecting a different content providing station to select next in accordance with the selection rule for selecting from among the content providing stations.

14. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 2, wherein:

the content providing station confirming (i) a communication state regarding communication between the content providing station and a content that is to send back and (ii) a response state regarding responding with respect to the content that is to send back; and if the communication state is less than a ~~desired~~ level, the content providing station sending back a content that is to be selected next in accordance with a predetermined content selection rule.

15. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 2, ~~comprising the step of~~ wherein:

in the case where bandwidth available for communication between the content selection requesting station and the content providing station is narrower than bandwidth necessary for transmitting a content that the content providing station is about to send back, the content providing station transmitting a content that is to be selected next to the content that the content

providing station is about to send back, in accordance with the a predetermined content selection rule.

16. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 2, ~~comprising the step of~~ wherein:

in a state where a content that the content providing station is about to send back is in use, the content providing station sending back a content that is to be selected next to the content that the content providing station is about to send, in accordance with a predetermined content selection rule.

17. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in Claim 16, wherein:

the state where the content is in use is a state where the content is being used by another content selection requesting station, or a state where a user on the content providing station side is using the content without using the content selection requesting station.

18. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

the content selection requesting station confirming (i) a communication state regarding communication between the content selection requesting station and the thus selected one of the content providing stations, and (ii) a response state regarding responding from the thus selected one of the content providing stations; and

if the communication state is less than a ~~desired~~ level, the content selection requesting station providing, to the operator, information that the communication state is less than the ~~desired~~ level.

19. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

the content providing station confirming (i) a communication state regarding communication between the content providing station and the content providing device thus selected, and (ii) a response state regarding responding with respect to the content providing device thus selected;

if the communication state is less than a ~~desired~~ level, the content providing station transmitting, to the content selection requesting station, information that the communication state is less than ~~a~~the ~~desired~~ level;

the content selection requesting station receiving the information; and

the content selection requesting station providing, to the operator, information that the communication state between the content providing station and the content providing device thus selected is less than ~~a~~the ~~desired~~ level.

20. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 13, wherein:

the state where the communication state is less than ~~a~~the ~~desired~~ level is a state where communication is possible but one of electric wave strength, the response state, and a communication error ratio is less than the ~~desired~~ level.

21. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 13, wherein:

the state where the communication state is less than ~~a~~the ~~desired~~ level is (i) a state where a station at the other end is not turned on, (ii) a state where no response is received because the station at the other end becomes too distant, or (iii) a state where the thus selected one of the content providing stations is physically disconnected from the content providing device.

22. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 18, wherein:

in providing, to the operator, information that the communication state between the content selection requesting station and the selected one of the content providing stations is less than the ~~desired~~ level, when the communication level is as such,

the content selection requesting station distinctly informing the operator whether the communication state is (A) a communication state where communication is possible but one of electric wave strength, the response state, and a communication error ratio is less than the ~~desired~~ level, or (B) a communication state where (i) a station at the other end is not turned on, (ii) no response is received because the station at the other end becomes too distant, or (iii) the content providing device is physically disconnected.

23. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in Claim 19, wherein:

in providing, to the operator, information that the communication state between the content selection requesting station and the content providing device thus selected is less than the ~~desired~~ level, when the communication level is as such,

the content selection requesting station distinctly informing the operator whether the communication state is (A) a communication state where communication is possible but one of electric wave strength, the response state, and a communication error ratio is less than the ~~desired~~ level, or (B) a communication state where (i) a station at the other end is not turned on, (ii) no response is received because the station at the other end becomes too distant, or the content providing device is physically disconnected.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

the content selection requesting station includes means which controls switching of an external connection device for a display device on which the content received by the content selection requesting station is to be displayed;

if the content selection requesting station is selected as the external connection device for the display device when the content selection requesting station receives the content ~~selection request~~switching instruction entered by the operator, the content selection requesting station performs content selection or content providing device selection; and

if all contents or content providing devices are selected once, or if a station other than the content selection requesting station is selected as the external connection device for the display device, the switching of the external connection device is carried out.

26. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

the selection rule is stored only in the content selection requesting station; and

the content or content providing device is held only by the content providing station.

27. (Currently amended) A content selection method in which in accordance with a request from a content selection requesting station, a content providing station ~~sends back~~selects a content from among a plurality of contents that the content providing station ~~has~~have and sends back the selected content to the content selection requesting station, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

the content providing station storing a control signal for the content that the content providing station has; and

if ~~a~~ the content to ~~send~~ be sent back is not available for viewing, the content providing station transmitting the control signal to the content so as to cause the content to be available for viewing.

the content providing station receiving a content switching instruction from the content selection requesting station in accordance with operation of the operator; and

wherein, the content providing station switches the content to be sent back, every time the same operation of the operator is performed.

28. (Currently amended) A content selection method in which in accordance with a request from a content selection requesting station, a content providing station ~~sends back~~selects a content from among a plurality of contents that the content providing station ~~has~~have and sends back the selected content to the content selection requesting station, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

the content providing station storing a control signal for the content that the content providing station has; and

when ~~a~~ the content to ~~send~~ be sent back is changed from a first content to a second content, the content providing station transmitting a control signal to the first content so as to cause the first content to be not in use,

the content providing station receiving a content switching instruction from the content selection requesting station in accordance with operation of the operator; and

wherein, the content providing station switches the content to be sent back, every time the same operation of the operator is performed.

29. (Currently Amended) A content selection requesting station which selects a desired content or content providing device from among contents or content providing devices that a plurality of content providing stations have, wherein:

the content selection requesting station transmits a content ~~selection request~~ switching instruction to the content providing station according to the method as set forth in claim 1.

30. (Currently Amended) A content providing station which, when selected by a content selection requesting station, transmits, to the content selection requesting station, what is contained in ~~a~~ the content or content providing device that the content providing station has, wherein:

the content providing station receives a content ~~selection request~~switching instruction from the content selection requesting station according to the method as set forth in Claim 1.

31. (Previously Presented) A content switching instruction device for use in the method as set forth in Claim 1, which transmits, to a content selection requesting station, a content switching instruction given by an operator.

32. (Currently amended) The content switching instruction device as set forth in Claim 31, wherein

the content switching instruction device transmitting the content switching instruction given by the operator, without using the content selection requesting station.

33. (Previously Presented) A program for causing a computer to implement the method as set forth in Claim 1.

34. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable recording medium storing a program for causing a computer to implement the method as set forth in Claim 1.

35. (Currently amended) A network system ~~structured by~~ having ~~a plurality of the~~ content selection requesting stations ~~as set forth in Claim 29~~, and a plurality of ~~the~~ content providing stations ~~as set forth in Claim 30, and by using~~ wherein the method as set forth in Claim 1 is performed,

the content selection requesting station selecting a desired content from among contents that the content providing stations have,

the content selection requesting station transmitting a content switching instruction to each of content providing stations according to the method as set forth in claim 1,

each of the content providing stations, when selected by a content selection requesting station, transmitting to the content selection requesting station, what is contained in content that the content providing station has,

each of the content providing station receiving the content switching instruction from the content selection requesting station according to the method as set forth in Claim 1.

36. (New) The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

the content selection requesting station storing information for specifying a content providing station and an associated content that have been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station; and

the content selection requesting station resuming, in accordance with the information, connection with the content providing station and the content providing devices having the associated content that have been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station, if the content selection requesting station has previously received the associated content of the content providing station and the connection has been stopped.